COGNITIVE ABILITIES AND SOCIAL SKILLS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RELATION TO HOME AND SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

A
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THE TITLE

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A sound and effective system of education results in the enfoldment of learner's potentialities, enlargement of their competencies and transformation of their interest, abilities, attitudes and values. Hence, the quality of education has to be improved for faster all round development. It is only the education which develops all the aspects of personality and inherent capabilities of a child. Personality may be defined as the totality of a being and includes physical, mental, emotional and temperamental make up. Various components of an individual like experience, perception, memory, imagination, instincts, habits, thoughts and sentiments constitute his/ her personality. There are different aspects of personality i.e. physical aspect which includes the personal appearance as indicated by height, weight, body build, facial expression, complexion together with voice, dress and other personal characteristics. Other aspect of personality is the cognitive aspect i.e. the mental traits of an individual such as intelligence, memory, thinking, imagination, attention, judgment, reasoning etc. Affective aspect is another important aspect of personality that includes anger, hatred, jealousy, joy, sorrow, fear, sympathy, love, pleasure, sentiments etc. Psychomotor aspect of personality includes all actions, skill related behaviours. The development of all the aspects of personality is the chief goal and function of the education which makes a difference to one's whole outlook about life and influences his total attitude towards society. Among all these aspects of personality, the cognitive development is of central importance because of its interrelationship and dependence with all other aspects of personality make-up of an individual.

Cognitive development refers to the development of the ability to think and reason. It is the construction of thought processes, including remembering, problem solving and decision making from childhood through adolescence to adulthood. The cognitive development will be different in different

developmental stages of a child. The children (6 to 12 years old) develop the ability to think in concrete ways such as how to combine, separate, order and transform objects and actions.

After this developmental stage the children enter in adolescent stage which is characterized by the beginning of development of more complex thinking processes including abstract thinking (thinking about possibilities), the ability to reason from known principles (form own new ideas or questions), the ability to consider many points of view according to varying criteria (complex or debate ideas or opinions) and the ability to think about the process of thinking. These all represent some sort of cognitive abilities.

COGNITIVE ABILITIES:

Cognitive abilities are the determining factors of an individual's learning abilities. These are the mental skills that are used in the process of acquiring knowledge. There are the set of abilities that are learned to varying degrees as a person grows and develops mentally. Cognitive abilities are the abilities that are used to learn, understand and integrate information in a meaningful way. Other aspects of cognitive abilities include creativity, which is the talent for combining ideas or objects into a new and useful product and interpersonal competence which is the ability to solve problems between people.

There are many cognitive abilities which can be broken down into very specific sets of skills. A brief description of some cognitive abilities is provided below:

- **Perception:**

Perception is the ability of interpretation of what we sensed. Perception represent our apprehension of a present situation in terms of our past experience.

- **Attention:**

Attention is the ability to sustain concentration on a particular object, action or thought.

- **Logical Thinking:**

Logical thinking is the ability to sequence and structure the thought to find the relationship between the facts and develop a chain of reasoning that make a sense.

- **Spatial Ability:**

Spatial ability involves visualizing and manipulating two- dimensional shapes or patterns and it also involves the shape matching, shape rotation, combining shapes etc.

- **Information ordering:**

Information ordering is the ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules.

- **Visualization:**

Visualization is the ability to imagine how something will look after it is moved around or when its parts are moved or rearranged.

- **Verbal ability:**

It is the ability in which general grammar portion is involved. Verbal ability test can include spellings, sentence completion. Because they depend on understanding the precise meaning of words, idioms and structure of language, they determinate very heavily towards native speakers of the language in which the test has been developed.

- **Numerical Ability:**

Numerical ability can be divided into two parts. The first part where one applies the simple arithmetic operations known as numerical speed tests which include the addition, subtractions, multiplication, division, percentage, ratios, fraction and decimals. The second part is known as numerical power test which requires one to interpret the information provided and apply the appropriate logic to answer them. It contains data interpretation, computation, table interpretation, estimation, graph interpretation etc.

- **Verbal Reasoning Ability:**

It is the ability which assesses one ability to use words in a logical way. Such ability measures one's understanding of vocabulary, ability to perceive and understand concepts and ideas expressed verbally. For measuring this ability, it include the question which will be in the form of comprehension, complex statements where the best tactic is to make notes about what one can deduce from each part of the text. These tests are designed to test the reasoning ability rather than facility with language.

- **Abstract Reasoning Ability:**

It is the ability to perceive relationships and then to work out any co-relationships without requiring any knowledge of language or mathematics. Abstract reasoning assesses the ability to understand complex concepts and assimilate new information beyond previous experience. This type of ability consist of items which require to recognize the pattern and similarities between shapes and figures. As a measure of reasoning , it is independent of educational and cultural background and can be used to provide an indication of intellectual potential.

In the present study, the investigator has taken only four major cognitive abilities i.e. verbal ability, numerical ability, verbal reasoning ability and abstract reasoning ability. The main reason for selecting these four cognitive abilities for the study is that, these abilities are the basic cognitive abilities and it is generally expected that these cognitive abilities are developed during elementary years of life of a child.

FACTORS INFLUENCING COGNITIVE ABILITIES:

These cognitive abilities are influenced by many factors. Out of those factors, there are two major factors that influence cognitive abilities of children. They are internal factors and environmental factors. The detail of these factors are given below:

INTERNAL FACTORS:

All those factors which lie within the individual are called internal factors. These factors include heredity factors, biological factors. These factors are discussed briefly as under:

- **Heredity factors:** Heredity factors play their part at the time of conception in the mother's womb. These factors' contribution is the real starting point and basis for all the growth and development that take place later in the life of the child. Hereditary factors lay down the foundation and it is the quality of this foundation that is helpful in the future growth and development of a child. The nervous system, which is one of the heredity factor, controls the body movement, affects the growth and development of a child in cognitive spheres.
- **Biological factors:** A child's constitutional make-up somatic structure, physique and body chemistry influence his growth and development throughout his life. The internal deformities, functions of nervous system, harmones, ductless glands influences various aspects such as physical, social, mental, emotional and moral of a person's growth and development.
- **Intelligence:** Intelligence, as the ability to learn, adjust and take right decision at right time, has a significant role in the overall growth and development of a child. The physical, social, emotional, moral and language development of a child is greatly influenced and controlled by the level of his intelligence.(Mangal 2005)

EXTERNAL FACTORS:

Apart from these internal factors, some environment factors or external factors also influence the cognitive abilities/ development of an individual. The details of these factors is provided below:

- **Learning opportunities:** The learning opportunities provided to a child affect the cognitive development. The more opportunities he gets, the better

is the cognition, because one will be able to add to his mental capacities by learning through these opportunities.

- **Play**: Play is quite important in the development of the cognitive abilities. Through plat activities the child interacts with the environment, receive stimuli and responds to them. Through this one learns new processes of acquire knowledge.
- **Economic status**: Economic status of the family also helps in the development of cognition. Children from better economic status get more opportunities and better training and it helps in cognitive development.
- **Home environment and society:** Family is much important from the point of view of providing the child with opportunities to learn, good encouraging atmosphere to the child, in which one will receive maximum stimuli and one's cognitive development will be up to the maximum level. Home environment is characterized by unconditional love, acceptance, permissiveness, democracy, co-operation, encouragement, tolerance, warm relationship among all the members of the home.

Although a child's genetic inheritance is unchangeable, there are definite ways through which parents can enhance their child's cognitive development with the help ofenvironmental factors. They provide stimulating learning materials and experiences at an early age, and can help their children to explore the world around them. As children mature, parents can challenge and support the children' talents. A supportive home environment in early childhood provides an advantage for those children, who have lagged behind in the cognitive development during early age.

The child learns through observing and imitating others in locality or in society. One learns language, habits by observing family and people around them. If society provide encouraging atmosphere, facilities for gaining knowledge like good schools, librarian's healthy recreation facilities, health facilities etc. to the children, it will develop possibility and good cognitive

capacity. So we see that home and society both play an important role in the development of cognition of the child.

After the childhood stage, a child enters in the school "the mini society". The school is a vibrant community center, radiating life and energy all around, wonderful edifice, resting on the foundation of goodwill, goodwill of public, goodwill of the parents and goodwill of the pupil. School provides an excellent environment to the children studying therein to develop their heritage. A brief overview of school environment is provided below:

School Environment:

A good school environment consists of a good physical and psychological environment i.e. educational environment. Proper school environment enhances the development of cognitive abilities among the students in many ways:

- School creates the environment for looking at multiple viewpoints and outcomes before starting a problem. In healthy school environment, cognitive abilities develop just about the time where projects like science fair projects are gaining importance. Such activities set the stage for the students being able to follow the scientific approach so as to complete his project.
- Positive school environment enhances the cognitive abilities like gaining poise as well as becoming more alert and clear mined, provide the ability to argue more logically. The poise, alertness and clear mindedness makes students more able to be the productive member of classroom, community and provides more confidence in their academic abilities.
- Healthy school environment develops the curiosity among children. Curiosity is one of the most important characteristics that a student brings to the table when it comes to learning. Curricular and co-curricular activities give rise to the curiosity among children.

- A good school environment encourages cognitive development among the students, by organizing different programmes such as debates, quizzes, seminars, workshops, science fair, model making exhibitions etc. School experience in the form of various type of such programmes and activities help tremendously in children's cognitive development.

From the above discussion, it may be concluded that a number of factors are there that have influence on cognitive abilities of the students. Out of these factors, apart from hereditary characteristics, the environmental factors comprising of both home and school environment have the major influence on the cognitive abilities of the students. These cognitive abilities have in one way or the other, directly or indirectly influence the social development of the students, which is also an important aspect of personality make-up of the child.The appropriate cognitive development/ cognitive abilities leads to better social development, development of social skills and ultimate better adjustment of an individual in his/ her immediate environment and social set-up. In other words, we can say that better social skills and adjustment is a byproduct of cognition and environment. A brief overview of social development and its related components is given below:

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

The maturing and growing child develops not only in physical, mental and emotional behaviour but also correspondingly in social development. The child's range in social activities is interwoven with other features of his growth, i.e. physical, mental and emotional. Social development means that the individual show awareness to social stimuli, especially pressure and difficulty of groups life, get on well with others in group and culture, act like them. The aim of society as a system is to make its living permanent. The one who wants to be an effective member of society must carry out its social development appropriately to one's age. The one's being adapted to physical and social environment is very important to spend life healthy, happily and successfully, so social development is very important for one's life.

Social development of child has two aspects. On the one hand, the individual learns the particular ways, customs, traditions and behaviour patterns of the society. This is known as socialization. On the other, the individual progressively expands his social horizon. He learns to include more and more people in his group, in which he feels at 'home' and for which he will make sacrifices. He becomes a citizen of the local community and learns along with people. He joins a variety of groups which help him to cultivate his own particular interest. He becomes a highly developed person in the society. These two aspects of the social development are dependent on social skills possessed by the child. These social skills includes co-operation, responsibilities, peer-relationship, self-control, anger management, sharing, allowing others to talk without interruption, empathy, assertion, compliance skills etc. Before going into details of various social skills, it is necessary to acquaint ourselves with the concept of social skills.

SOCIAL SKILLS:

Social skills are the foundation for getting along with others. These are the patterns of social behaviour which make individuals socially competent, i.e. able to produce desired effect on other people. Now, for the sake of understanding the meaning of social skills, here are some important definitions:

Rinn and Markel (1979) define social skills behaviourlly as a repertoire of verbal and non-verbal behaviours by which children affect the responses of other individuals (eg. peer, parents, siblings and teachers) in inter-personal context.

Gresham and Elliott (1984) placed the emphasis on the social validity of the behaviour. Thus, social skills are those behaviour which, with in a given situations, predict important social outcomes such as peer acceptance, significant others' judgment of behaviour, other social behaviours known to correlate consistently with peer acceptance or significant other's judgment.

According to Caldarella and Merrell (1997), social skills can be placed into several categories as under;

- Peer relations skills (complimenting others, offering help, inviting peers to play).
- Self-management skills (controlling temper following rules, compromising).
- Academic skills (completing work independently, listening to the teacher, not distracting).
- Compliance skills (following directions, following rules, using free time appropriately).
- Assertion skill (initiating conversations, acknowledging compliments, making requests).

In the present study, the investigator has taken only four major social skills i.e. assertion, empathy, self-control and co-operation. These social skills are discussed as follows:

Assertion:

Assertion is the behaviour by a person in an interpersonalcontext which express that person's feeling, attitudes, wishes, opinion, or rights directly and honestly while respecting the feeling, attitude, wishes, opinions and rights of other persons. Assertive people are capable of expressing and reacting to positive and negative emotions without undue anxiety or aggression.

Empathy:

Empathy is the ability to imagine what life for another person. Without empathy, our communication with others will amount to one-way traffic. Worst, we will be acting and behaving according to our self- interest and bound to run into problems. Empathy connects us with common humanity. It protects us from prejudices, blame and judgment those things that divide use from each other. Empathy helps us to accept others, improve social interaction in situations of ethic or cultural diversity, and encourage nurturing behaviour towards people in need of care and assistance.

Self- control:

It refers to having power or control over one's own action. It means that an individual knows right from wrong. The skill of self- control will allow children to know that the right thing to do it to be tolerant of others despite differences. It is the behaviour that emerges in conflict situation, such as responding appropriately to teasing, and in non-conflict situations that require taking turns and compromising.

Co-operation:

Co-operation is the process of working or acting together. It is self help as well as mutual help. In its simplest form it involves things working in harmony, while in its more complicated form, it can involve something as complex as the inner working of human being or even the social pattern of a nation. Co-operation includes the behaviours such as helping others, sharing materials and complying with rules and directions.

The main reason for taking these four social skills in the present study is that these are the basic social skills which are helpful for the adolescents for their better adjustment in the society. In order to strengthen the human relations, it is vital that children at an early age can learn and have the opportunity to practice the social skills considered appropriate by society for their utmost development.

FACTORS INFLUENCING SOCIAL SKILLS:

There are many factors which influence the social skills of the children but certain major factors that have a direct or indirect bearing on acquisition of these social skills are briefly discussed below:

Playmates and friends:

The young child is more anxious to have the approval of his parents and other adults than of his playmates. But after he has entered the school, the approval of his playmates becomes more necessary to him than the approval of his parents. It is then that he turns his attention to development of personality

traits which his playmates admire. Friendship becomes increasingly important in middle childhood and adolescence especially for the development of social skills. As children improve their ability to understand the emotions of others, build increasingly mature friendships and strengthen their interpersonal and learning related skills.

The popularity of the child plays a considerable part in the development of his personality. Children who are accepted in the social group who feel that other children like and admire them, or who find themselves from time to time in position of leadership in their groups develop a self-confidence and a better personality.

Socio-Economic status of the family:

The patter of the life varies according to socio-economic group to which the family belongs. There are marked differences to the behaviour patterns in families of different socio-economic status in use of money, in child training and attitude towards discipline and parents. The family members of high socio-economic status have the opportunity of moving about in a higher and wider circle of society. They get frequent occasions to mix with a large number of and different sorts of people. This naturally helps them in their socialization.

Home environment and Influence of society:

The home provides the first human contact to the child. It plays a major role in the process of social development. A good home produces a well adjusted personality of the child. The congenial home environment has a positive and socializing effect on the child. A happy, contented and well knit family helps in advancing social adjustment of the individual members. Children begin developing social skills within the context of the parent –child relationship. It is from this relationship that children learn to read emotional cues, regulate their own emotions and behaviour, andincorporate the responses of their parents into their own experience with the people and situation; a process known as the social referencing. From observing family members,

children learn appropriate social rules and behaviour, which they apply to interactions outside of the family.

Family serves three general functions in social life. They are:

- Family is the major agency for socialization of the child.
- Family help in transmitting the cultural heritage.
- Family is the provision of an outlet for the expression of personality.

Family being a primary group promotes intimate face to face association and interaction, which is more educational than any other personal interaction. It satisfies most of the needs of the child and provides emotional experiences which stimulate or retard the learning activities of children.

Love and affection are the basic psychological need of the children. If the child is treated with love and affection, he feels secure and thus, develops self-confidence. This gives him the necessary courage to enter into social relationships outside the family. If the children get love and affection at home, they naturally expect love and affection from others also; this develops in them a positive attitude towards life and other people, which help them in their social development.

The influencesof society further affect the child' social development. It determines what standards it accepts and which type of child training method they use for their social development. Thekind of locality in which the child lives has a marked influence on his whole outlook on life. The societyinfluencesthe relationship of the child with his parents, siblings or any individual who may live permanently or temporarily in the home. It is the society which influences the child's ideas, his perception about things, persons and his experiences which play important role in determining the attitudes and behaviour of the child. After home or family influences, there comes the role of school where a child enters for learning many behaviours and skills. When a child enters in the school,it serves many purposes which family/ home fails or incapable to do so. The school has great impact/ influence on social

development of the child. A brief description of such school' influenceson child' social development is given below:

School influence:

The influence of the school in the social development of the child is very great because the school becomes a substitute for the home and the teacher a substitute for the parents. A child spends approximately 4 to 6 hours per day in the school. That is why its impact is second only to the home in the individual's development. The school also imparts the maximum general culture and minimum knowledge of some subjects to the children that is necessary for living a useful and successful life. School also prepares each child as a responsible citizen of the modern democracy. An important function which the school has to perform is of character formation and moral education. The family cannot perform this function with regard to school going children so adequately.

School environment develops social skills among children such as co-operation, communication, emotional understanding, regulation, self-control, aggression, problem solving team work, anger management, conflict management, peer negotiation, active listing, increased acceptance and tolerance of diverse group. All these social skills are very important for the social life of any individual.

AN OVERVIEW:

From the forgoing discussion, it can be summed up that, cognitive abilities and social skills are the bye products of the heredity and environmental factors. Irrespective of hereditary characteristics one possesses, it seems that both home and school environment play an important role in the cognitive and social development of an individual. Encouraging environment provided by the parents at home is supportive for better & enhanced learning among the children. Supportive environment of home provides additional advantage for children or can compensate to some extent in respect of those children who

have lagged behind in cognitive development at their early age due to certain hereditary problems.

In the similar manner, acquiring social skills does not happen overnight and is also affected to a large extent by the home environment of an individual. These skills are developed across years of observation, discussion, practice and constructive feedback. As human being, our socialization process starts from home. The home environment in which a child grows, plays a vital role in the development of social skills. Parental warmth and sensibility, parent-child attachment, broken homes, single child trend etc. affect the development of the social skills among children.

Thus, on the basis of above discussion, it may be inferred that home environment has a great impact on the development of cognitive abilities and social skills among children. The review of related literature also reveals that cognitive abilities are the essential requirements for proper socialization and development of social skills among children.

Apart from this, a child spends approximately 4 to 6 hours per day in the school. The school becomes the substitute for the home and teacher is the substitute for the parents. That is why its impact is second only to the home in the development of the individual. For developing a balanced personality, it becomes the responsibility and major aim of the school to provide a supportive and congenial environment to the children. For students' cognitive development, school creates the environment which raises the curiosity, enhances the cognitive abilities like gaining poise, becoming more alert, clear minded, provide the ability to argue more logically, to develop thinking among children through curricular and co-curricular activities.

In the similar manner, school is potent agency for the social development of the children. In the school, the child gets the opportunities of mixing with the large number of the students, and thus, getting varied types of social experiences. Consistent and effective use of acquired social skills is more likely to occur in schools having a positive social atmosphere. Most of

the students think of a situation in which they did not feel valued and as a result, did not respond appropriately or compassionately to others. It is the positive school environment which ensures that all students are valuable and respected member of a learning community. In addition to this, school experiences in the form of various types of school programmes and activities (community activities, aesthetic & cultural activities and civic training activities), opportunities for healthy social communication, guidance from teachers, determine to a large extent the social skills and attitudes as well as the habits that the child learns. Thus, the healthy and positive school environment helps tremendously in the children's social development.

So, it may be concludedfrom the above discussion thatschool is the place where child got the opportunity to expand his horizons cognitively and socially,wherehome fails to do so. Besides the home environment, a child develops himself in a planned and in a systematic way in the school environment. Conclusively, it may be said that both home environment as well as school environment are the importantinfluential factors for cognitive and social development of the child.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

To conduct a good research investigation, it is necessary to lay the foundation of the research. So, it is very important to go through the literature regarding the research conducted. The review of related literature provides us with an opportunity to gain insight into the research, measures, subjects and approaches employed by the other researchers. A careful review of the research journals, books, dissertations, thesis and other printed and non-printed sources of information on the problem to be investigated is one of the most important steps for planning and carrying out a useful investigation.

Taking this into account and the problem under investigation, the researcher tried to explore the existing literature and research studies conductedthroughout the globe to acquaint herself with different aspects and dimensions of cognitive abilities, social skills as well as home and school

environment. An attempt is made here by the researcher to cite a brief account of these studies:

Opera (1997) studied the relationship of authoritative parenting style of head start families and the development of appropriate social skills in preschool children was explored in this study. In addition, the relationship between various demographic factors (age, educational level, employment status, and religious affiliation) of Head Start Single family parents and caregivers and social skills (co-operation, assertiveness, and self- control) of preschool children was examined. The findings in this study indicated that there was no correlation between the authoritative parenting style of Head Started Single female parents and caregiver and the development of appropriate social skills on their preschool children. These Head Start families were found to be an unusual group of those who live in poverty. The Head Start single female parents and caregivers were found to have moderate or high levels of authoritative parenting styles. The preschool children of those families were considered average compared to other children when demonstrating the social skills of co-operation, assertiveness, and self-control. This research points to the important of considering appropriate interventions when counseling these families in parenting skill that contribute to the development of positive skills in their children.

Giroux & Grace (2000) carried out this study which determines if the implementation of a structured social skills program within a class-room setting would decrease the inappropriate behaviours of the students. Heterogeneously grouped fourth grade classrooms were used for this study and pre/ post test was conducted on the students. The results revealed that students who participated in a structured social skills program do differ in their sense of self from students who had no formal social skills program. The positive comments made by the students and teachers involved in the social skills program should be considered as valid documentation in the positive sides of the evaluation.

Holmes &Fillary (2002) investigated the ability of adults with mild intellectual disabilities to appropriately engage in the 'small talk' that is part of any work place. They noted that workers with intellectual disabilities who demonstrate competence in social skills are generally perceived more positively than those who lack such skills, regardless in using social skills will lead to positive perceptions of persons with disabilities can be extended to other community setting such as post-secondary education, neighbourhoods, and places of worship.

Ricci & Ansari (2004) examined the home literacy environments, parental beliefs about reading, children's interest in reading, and the emergent literacy skills of children with Down syndrome. Results showed that the home literacy environment but predicted children's interest in reading, and parental beliefs about reading related to these children's receptive vocabulary and comprehensions of meaning. Although mental age (and to some extent chronological age) proved to be the best predictor of these children's emergent literacy skills, children with Down syndrome achieved higher levels of vocabulary and comprehension when their parents actively involved them in shared book- reading through asking many questions, encouraging them to ask questions and help tell the story, and guiding them to learn lessons, morals, and important life skills from books.

Farris & Carrie (2006)investigated how the home literacy environment and learning-related social skills independently and interactively predicted early literacy skills among children. Hierarchical regressions revealed that the home literacy environment predicated children's early reading and vocabulary skills, when controlling for material education and age. Further, the result revealed that learning related social skills did not significantly predict early literacy skills, nor was a significant interaction between the home literacy environment and learning- related social skills detected.

Banner &Leendertsen (2007) studied the effect of peer network social skills intervention. The peer work training was implemented with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who are identified as high functioning and a network of their non-disabled peers. Results of the social validity measures completed by teachers and parents estimated varied levels of improved social functioning in the students with ASD. Due to the lack of procedural integrity while implementing the study, the result lack internal validity, therefore, conclusions cannot be made concerning the findings. While increases in social interaction were demonstrated, it is unclear what caused the increase to occur.

Lee & Jung (2007) examined the relation between various aspects of maternal working conditions, included hours worked, number of jobs, total earning, availability of benefits, occupational work schedule, and job satisfaction, and young children's (0 to 45 mouths) motor, social and cognitive development. They investigated whether maternal working conditions are related to the quality of home environments for young children indicated by the level of cognitive stimulation and emotional support provided by mothers at home. The results indicated that of the work variables only job satisfaction was statistically significant, and it was negatively related to young children's development. The relationship between the maternal working conditions and the quality of cognitive and emotional home environment of young children revealed that working fewer hours, compared to working full time was associated with more enriched cognitively simulating home environments and that total earning were positively related support at home. Results also showed that availability of benefits in a predicator of the quality of home environments. Availability of flexible hours benefit was positively related to the level of cognitive stimulation that mothers provided to their children. The cognitive and emotional home environment did not mediate the relation between job dissatisfaction and young children's development. None of the interactions between maternal working conditions and marital and poverty status met the criteria for statistical significance.

Nelson (2009)conduteda observational study of social skills learning within third, fourth and fifth grade. The participating subjects were articulate in expressing the strategies that do and do not work within their social group. They expressed and demonstrated a security within their learning environment and can understanding of individual differences and the need for acceptance of all peers. Their teaching modeled a deep understanding and respect for all feelings and dealt with concerns and frustration as they came up. As a result, the data indicate that students who have been engaged in an established social-emotional program do exhibit behaviours that are a result of the program.

Dewey & Bento (2009)examined the effectiveness of one approach, that of infusion, to teaching thinking skills. Researcher wants to investigate the impact of an infusion methodology, activating children's thinking skills (ACTS), on the cognitive, social and emotional development of children in year 4-6 in primary school. The results shows that the experimental group made significantly greater gain in cognitive ability skills over a year period compared to the waiting list control. Qualitative data demonstrated a positive impact on children's social and emotional development. Further the research indicated that children's cognitive abilities can be developed following a 2 year period of the ACTS infusion intervention while some positive effects were evidence on the social and emotional development of children.

Siva (2009) studied & highlighted the importance of non-cognitive skills as determinants of young people's cognitive outcomes at school. The main peculiarly of this intervention is that is solely targets student's non-cognitive skills such as self-confidence, locus of control, self-esteem and motivation with the aim of improving pupil's record of attendance and end of compulsory education (age 16) cognitive outcomes. He evaluated the effect of the policy on test scores in standardized national exams at age-16 using both least squares and propensity score matching methods. Additionally, he exploits repeated observations on pupils test scores to control for unobservable that might affect students' outcomes and selection into the program. We find little

evidence that the program significantly helped treated youths to improve their age-16 test out-comes. We also find little evidence of heterogeneous policy effects along a variety of dimensions.

Melhuish (2010) studied the impact of the home learning environment on child cognitive development. The results revealed that measure of home learning environment added to the understanding of the influences that might affect the child's cognitive development. Research findings encourage active parenting strategies help to promote young children's cognitive development and educational achievement both early and later in development.

Sigfusdottir,Asgeirsdottir, Sigurdsson &Gudjonandsson (2011) investigated the relationship between physical activity depressed mood, under conditions of family conflict. The study shows that while family conflict increases the likelihood of depressed mood, among adolescents, physical activities decreases the likelihood of depressed mood. Furthermore, physical activity plays a more important role among those adolescents living in aversive circumstances, than other adolescents, as family conflict and physical activity interact in the effect on depressed mood for adolescents living in such circumstances. The finding highlights the role of physical activity in decreasing mental distress among adolescents, especially those living in aversive circumstances at home.

Mehra&Kaur (2011) conducted a study to compare the effect of outdoor environmental educational program on social skills of primary students of high, average, and low intelligence. They concluded that students taught environmental education by the outdoor environmental education program exhibited better mean gain on social skills, and its dimensions, interpersonal skills and friendship skills but equal mean gain scores on concern for others and diplomatic skills as compared to students of control group who were taught environmental education by traditional method of instruction. Students of high, average and low intelligence exhibited comparative Mean gains on social skills and its dimensions, concern for others, interpersonal skills, friendship skills and

diplomatic skills. It was also found that there was no significant interaction between treatment and level of intelligence in relation to mean gain on social skills and its dimensions, concern for others, interpersonal skills, friendship skills and diplomatic skills.

Anjum& Rani (2012)conducted a study to determine the impact of child rearing practice on the cognitive abilities of children. Cognitive abilities are measured on the basis of creativity and intelligence. Results indicated that the children of democratic rearing group were intellectually superior to those of authoritarian rearing group and urban subject were found to be more creative in all dimensions of non-verbal creativity.

CarlssonDalh&Rooth (2012) presented the paper on the effect of schooling on cognitive skills. This paper exploited conditionally random variation in the assigned test data for a battery of cognitive test which almost all 18 years old males were required to take in presentation for military service in Sweden. They find that extra 10 days of school instruction raises cognitive scores on crystallized intelligence tests (synonym and technical comprehension test) by appropriately one percent of standard deviation, whereas extra non-school days have almost no effect. The benefit of additional school days is homogeneous, with similar effect sizes based on past grades in school, parental education, and father's earning. In contrast, test scores on fluid intelligence test (spatial and logic tests) do not increase with additional days of schooling, but do increase modestly with age. These findings have important implications for questions about the malleability of cognitive skills in young adults, schooling models of signaling versus human capital, the interpretations of these scores in wage regressions, and policy related to the length of the school years.

Khera&Khosla (2012) investigated the relationship between self-concept and core life skills among adolescents studying in secondary classes of Sarvoday schools in Delhi. The major findings of the study that there is a positive co-relation between core affective life skills and self-concept of

adolescents which means those who possess these essential skills are better confidence in all aspects.

Paul &Vanaja (2012) has done a research to study the parents' perceptions and developing social skills among mentally challenged children in Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh. The study was focused on the opinion of parents on the categorization of social skills, social skills to be developed and activities to be developed in their children. Parents give more importance to development of personal skills. Their order of preferences is also give importance on social skills like speaking, courteously, meaningful interactions with others, behaving in a socially acceptable manner, improving the vocabulary of the child and participation in social functions independently but lesser preferences is given to understanding the following interactions, narrating incidents and seeking permission. Parents have accorded higher level of importance on social skill viz. smiling in response, obeying commands and behaving appropriately with opposite sex. They recommended that efforts need to be made to impart training to parents and teachers to develop social skills among mentally retarded children by parents and teacher with courteous speaking, meaningful interaction with others, smiling in response and saying please, thank you, sorry etc., appropriately so the mentally challenged children can inspire with these activities. They further recommended that special incentives are to be given to the research in the field of special education and inclusive education should be implemented at all types of educational institutions and at all levels.

Viswanathappa&Janapati (2012) focused on the relationship between social skills and home environment of secondary level tribal students of secondary level tribal students of Khamman district in Andhra Pradesh. The students were drawn from residential and non-residential schools of Khamman district, Andhra Pradesh. The results revealed that there is a lot of heterogeneity in the social skills and home environment among the secondary school tribal students. Tribal boys possess better social skills than tribal girls; tribal girls

perceived healthy home environment more than tribal boys. The tribal students studying in the school of excellence managed by the tribal welfare development were found to exhibit better social skills and home environment than the tribal students of other types of schools.

Nelen Grip &Fouarge (2013) presenteda paper which analysis the relation between maternal work hours and the cognitive outcomes of young school going children. The study is highly relevant for public policy as in most countries maternal employment ratio rise when children enter school. We find no negative relation between maternal working hours and child outcomes as is often found for pre-school aged children. Instead, they find that children sorting test score is higher when their mothers work part time (girls) or full time (boys). Furthermore, they find that planned parent-child activities are positively related to children's language test score. Nevertheless, they do not find that a richer home environment in terms of the number of parent- child.

RudasillAdelson Callahan Houlihan& Keizer (2013) studies the gifted students' perceptions of parenting style: Associations with cognitive ability, sex, race and age. Children whose parents are warm and responsive yet also set limits and have reasonable expectations for their children tend to have better outcomes than their peers whose parents show less warmth and responsiveness, have low expectations, or both. Parenting behavior is related to family race and children's sex, age, and cognitive ability. However, there is no work that examines how children's cognitive abilities are related to their perceptions of their mothers' and fathers' parenting styles and the extent to which these relationships are moderated by race, sex, and age in a sample of gifted students. Results provide further support for the notion that authoritative parenting promotes positive outcomes for children, particularly those who have been identified as gifted.

Niklas& Schneider (2013) conducted a study on Home literacy environment (HLE) and the beginning of reading and spelling. Therefore, it is important to identifying precursor variables which predict these abilities early

in order to identify children possibly at risk of developing reading or spelling difficulties. Relevant precursors include letter knowledge, phonological awareness (PA), vocabulary, and cognitive abilities. Moreover, also social aspects such as the socio economic status of the family (SES), the migration background and the 'Home Literacy Environment' are of important. The results highlight the importance of HLE for the development of linguistic competencies also for a German context. HLE was not only a good predictor of early vocabulary and PA, but additionally directly influenced PA at the beginning of primary school. Moreover, HLE acted as a mediator between SES and migration background on the one hand and the precursors the other hand. This finding indicates that research and policy should focus more on learning environment in families to improve children's achievement.

AN OVERVIEW:

A glimpse aforesaid studies clearly revealed that there are two main factors which influence the child' cognitive and social development. The home and schoolenvironment had a great impact on child development in all areas.

The studies of Ricci & Ansari (2004) andMelhuish (2010) found that the parents' active involvement and creative strategies adopted by them are helpful to promote young children's cognitive development. In the similar manner, Sigfusdottir et.al. (2011) and Rudasill (2013) revealed in their studies that the family conflicts, less warmth and responsiveness and low expectations led adolescents towards frustration, depression and low in their cognitive development.

Apart from this, it is evident from the studies of many researchers such as Dewey & Bento(2009), Silva (2009) and Carlsson, Dalh&Rooth (2012) who indicated that children gone through the infusion intervention for teaching skills, attended extra days of school instruction and participated in the programme for cognitive outcomes has greater gain in cognitive ability. According to Dewey & Bento (2009), "children's cognitive abilities also laid positive effects on social and emotional development". Giroux &Grace (2000)

and Nelson (2009) observed that the students, who participated in social skillsprogramme organized by the school, possessed better social skills and sense of self as compared to those who did not participated in social skillsprogramme. So, it is clear from these studies that the effective school environment, innovative methodology and creative efforts by the school significantly influence children's cognitive and social development.

The above mentioned studies clearly revealed that the home and school environment has a great impact on the cognitive and social development. The appropriate cognitive development / cognitive abilities lead to better social development.But, no study came in the way of the investigator which could indicate the relative importance of home or school environment in development of the cognitive abilities and social skills. So, the present investigation is an effort by the researcher, to enquire which environment (whether home or the school environment) has a dominant effect on the child's cognitive abilities and social skills.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The development in the field of science and technology has accelerated the process of growth in various sectors which has resulted in modifying our life goals and needs. It is generally observed that economic values are superseding other desired values in the current circumstances. This may be due to the process of modernization that has not only affected our life style but also our value system, cultural setup, interests and even our thinking patterns. Today, everybody wants to be rich and successful in life without making much efforts and resorting to different shortcuts. In other words, economic values have overcome the social values in current scenario which can be witnessed in daily life experiences and various reports mentioned in newspapers and other non-print media. This change in value pattern and shift in thinking of a larger chunk of population has also made a significant impact on our education system.

The students coming out from our prevailing education system after getting a particular qualification seem to be lacking in desired social values and thinking patterns. As a result, the education system of present is not producing such citizens that are required for social and national development or who can contribute for upliftment of the society. In other words, we can say that education is not successful in cultivating appropriate thinking and social skills among the students. However, the role of education is conceptualized as making children capable of becoming responsible, productive and useful members of society who are imbibed with lasting values, human ideals and appropriate thinking abilities. The same has also been highlighted in CBSE document "Manual for teachers" on continuous and comprehensive evaluation in which the major emphasis has been laid on life skills education of the children. However, teachers and parents are still more worried about academic excellence of children rather than emphasizing on development of basic life skills (cognitive abilities and social skills) among the children. This sort of orientation needs to be changed and efforts are going on at present so as to develop such life skills among the children. Life skills in general have been defined as the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. 'Adaptive' means that a person is flexible in approach and is able to adjust in different circumstances. 'Positive behaviour' implies that a person is forward looking and even in difficult situations, can find a ray of hope and opportunities to find solutions. Essentially, there are two kinds of skills those related to thinking that are termed as "thinking skills" and skills related to dealing with others which are termed as "social skills." While thinking skills relate to reflection at a personal level, social skills include interpersonal skills and do not necessarily depend on logical thinking.

Keeping into view such an enormous importance of life skills in the life of a child, it was decided by the investigator to study the prevailing level of different cognitive abilities and social skills among the students who are at adolescent stage "the spring season of life of the individual." This is the stage

where learning is at its peak and is characterized by experimentation, risk-taking and dealing with pressure from different sides. The habits, attitude, skills etc. acquired during this stage are long lasting and become a part of the individual's personality. So, it was thought worthwhile by the researcher to look into the cognitive abilities and social skills possessed by children of this adolescent stage i.e. of 12-14 years age group.

We all are well-versed with the fact that the cognitive abilities and social skills are the byproduct of certain hereditary factors and environmental influences. Although, any change cannot be brought in hereditary characteristics of individuals but environmental conditions can be designed in such a manner that can have positive impact on cognitive abilities and social skills of the students. Hence, it was decided by the investigator to inquire into the influences of home and school environment of child on his/ her cognitive abilities and social skills. In the present study, the investigator will try to find out the impact of home and school environment on students' cognitive abilities and social skills and will also ascertain that whether, home environment or school environment is more helpful in determining or predicting cognitive abilities and social skills among them.

The results of the present study will be helpful for the teachers, parents, curriculum framers and educational administrators in understanding the relative importance of home and school environment in developing cognitive and social skills among the students and thus, necessary steps can be initiated by them in bringing required modifications in overall school environment, pedagogy, curriculum and its transaction processes.

Considering from another angle, it is generally observed in social sector that our old traditions and family system is undergoing abrupt changes and mostly the joint family system is disintegrating into nuclear family system. This is mainly on account of over emphasis on economical values in the present scenario. Today, the parents of most of the children are working and as a result, are not able to devote required time for their children which is not

helping in imbibing desired social skills and values among their children. However, the social skills and values are necessary for overall development of all individuals which is further beneficial for national development in its inclusive sense which is "the main mantra of 12th Five Year Plan". Moreover, various print and non-print media are currently full of news items related to corruption, terrorism, naxalism, rape cases, molestation in public places etc. which are only taking place due to decline in social values and use of intellectual abilities in negative direction. Furthermore, it is seen that young population and adolescents are mostly involved in such henious crimes. This is to a larger extent indicates loopholes and weaknesses of our educational system in realizing its desired aims and objectives. This calls for undertaking a study that can suggest some ways and measures to build a conducive and healthy school environment congenial for inculcating desired thinking and social skills among the students. The present study is an effort in this direction.

In addition to this, the current scenario is of resource crunch with maximum exploitation of natural resources leading to lack of co-operation, tolerance, empathy, self- control among the individuals. This also, in one way or other is related to the thinking pattern and social values possessed by the individuals. However, it is our prime duty as a useful member of a society to inculcate appropriate social skills and values among the younger generation which is only possible through building and providing a congenial environment at home and school situations. So, the present study has been undertaken which will suggest some recommendations for building better environment at home and school for the children.

The review of related literature also indicates that cognitive abilities and social skills seem to have certain relationship in the sense that the development of the social skills is not possible without possessing required cognitive abilities. On the other hand, without possessing appropriate desired social skills, the cognitive abilities cannot be used in a positive and constructive way. This is also evident from many incidents like attack on World Trade

Centre,Indian Parliament and many others. Thus, the investigator considered it justified to undertake present investigation which will throw light on the interrelationship between cognitive abilities and social skills and how social skills are influenced by cognitive abilities possessed by children.

The results of the present investigation will be beneficial for those who are concerned with making our education system better, more responsible, productive by devising and suggesting certain interventions strategies not only for developing desired cognitive abilities and social skills of adolescents but also for bringing requisite changes in home and school environment of the adolescents.

On the basis of above mentioned discussion, the researcher thought it imperative to undertake present investigation which is stated as under:

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

"Cognitive Abilities and Social Skills of Elementary School Students in relation to Home and School Environment"

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1) To study the prevalence of following cognitive abilities and social skills of elementary school students.

a) Cognitive Abilities:

i) Verbal Ability

ii) Numerical Ability

iii) Verbal Reasoning Ability

iv) Abstract Reasoning Ability

b) Social skills:

i) Assertion

ii) Co-operation

iii) Empathy

iv) Self- control

2) To study the difference in following cognitive abilities of elementary school students across different levels of home environment.

i) Verbal Ability

ii) Numerical Ability

iii) Verbal Reasoning Ability

iv) Abstract Reasoning Ability

3) To study the correlation between home environment and following cognitive abilities of elementary school students.

i) Verbal Ability

ii) Numerical Ability

iii) Verbal Reasoning Ability

iv) Abstract Reasoning Ability

4) To study the difference in following cognitive abilities of elementary school students across different levels of school environment.

i) Verbal Ability

ii) Numerical Ability

iii) Verbal Reasoning Ability

iv) Abstract Reasoning Ability

5) To study the correlation between school environment and following cognitive abilities of elementary school students.

i) Verbal Ability

ii) Numerical Ability

iii) Verbal Reasoning Ability

iv) Abstract Reasoning Ability

6) To find out and compare the predictive efficacy of home environment and school environment in determining following cognitive abilities of elementary school students.

i) Verbal Ability

ii) Numerical Ability

iii) Verbal Reasoning Ability

iv) Abstract Reasoning Ability

7) To study the difference in following social skills of elementary school students possessing different level of overall cognitive abilities.

i) Assertion

ii) Co-operation

iii) Empathy

iv) Self- control

8) To study the difference in following social skills of elementary school students with respect to type of home environment.

i) Assertion

ii) Co-operation

iii) Empathy

iv) Self-control

9) To study the interaction between level of overall cognitive abilities and home environment with respect to following social skills of elementary school students.

i) Assertion

ii) Co-operation

iii) Empathy

iv) Self-control

10) To study the correlation between overall cognitive abilities and following social skills of elementary school students with respect to type of home environment.

i) Assertion

ii) Co-operation

iii) Empathy

iv) Self- control

11) To study the difference in following social skills of elementary school students with respect to type of school environment.

i) Assertion

ii) Co-operation

iii) Empathy

iv) Self- control

12) To study the interaction between level of overall cognitive abilities and school environment with respect to following social skills of elementary school students.

i) Assertion

ii) Co-operation

iii) Empathy

iv) Self- control

13) To study the correlation between overall cognitive abilities and following social skills of elementary school students with respect to type of school environment.

i) Assertion

ii) Co-operation

iii) Empathy

iv) Self- control

14) To find out and compare the predictive efficacy of home environment and school environment in determining following social skills of elementary school students.

i) Assertion

ii) Co-operation

iii) Empathy

iv) Self- control

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY:

1) Elementary school students belonging to different type of home environment differ significantly in following cognitive abilities:

i) Verbal Ability
ii) Numerical Ability
iii) Verbal Reasoning Ability
iv) Abstract Reasoning Ability

2) There exists significant positive correlation between home environment of elementary school students and different cognitive abilities possessed by them.

3) Elementary school students belonging to different type of school environmentdiffer significantly in following cognitive abilities:

i) Verbal Ability

ii) NumericalAbility

iii) Verbal Reasoning Ability

iv) Abstract Reasoning Ability

4) There exists significant positive correlation between school environment of elementary school students and different cognitive abilities possessed by them.

5) Elementary school students possessing different level of overall cognitive abilities do not differ significantly in following social skills:

   i) Assertion

   ii) Co-operation

   iii) Empathy

   iv) Self-control

6) Elementary school students belonging to different type of home environment differ significantly in following social skills:

   i) Assertion

   ii) Co-operation

   iii) Empathy

   iv) Self- control

7) Level of overall cognitive abilities and home environment interact significantly with respect to following social skills of elementary school students:

   i) Assertion

   ii) Co-operation

   iii) Empathy

   iv) Self-control abilities

8) There exists no significant correlation between level of overall cognitive abilities and social skills of elementary school students belonging to different type of home environment.

9) Elementary school students belonging to different type of school environment differ significantly in following social skills:

   i) Assertion

   ii) Co-operation

iii) Empathy

iv) Self-control

10) Level of overall cognitive abilities and school environment interact significantly with respect to following social skills of elementary school students:

i) Assertion

ii) Co-operation

iii) Empathy

iv) Self-control

11) There exists no significant correlation between level of overall cognitive abilities and social skills of elementary school students belonging to different type of school environment.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

Research is the lifelong and dimensionless process. The scope of problem in hand is very vast and comprehensive. So, it is necessary to delimit its scope to the following aspects:

1. The study will be restricted to only two dependent variables i.e. cognitive abilities andsocial skills.
2. The study will be further confined to two independent variables namely, home environment and school environment.
3. Out of twelve districts of H.P., only 4 districts will be selected for conducting present study.
4. The study will be confined only to the upper primary school students in the age group of 12-14 years studying in 7^{th} or 8^{th} classes in the schools affiliated to H.P. Board of School Education, Dharamshala.
5. For measuring various cognitive abilities of elementary (upper primary) school students, a cognitive abilities test will be constructedby the

researcher herself which will measure following four cognitive abilities only:

i) Verbal Ability

ii) Numerical Ability

iii) Verbal Reasoning Ability

iv) Abstract Reasoning Ability

6. Home and school environment will be studied in terms of perception of each individual student about his or her own home and school respectively.

7. For measuring various social skills of selected elementary (upper primary) school students, Social Skill Rating System developed by Frenk M. Gresham and Stephen N. Elliot willbe used by translating it into Hindi language whose content validity will be ascertained in context of its use in local, social and cultural scenario. In addition, test – retest reliability and split-half reliability of translated version of SSRS will also be ascertained by the researcher.

8. Only following four social skills will be taken into consideration in present study:

i) Assertion

ii) Co-operation

iii) Empathy

iv) Self- control.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS:

To avoid ambiguity and give a clear picture of a problem, it is necessary to explain each term mentioned in the title of the problem selected. Certain terms with a specific meaning have been used in the present study. The operational definitions of the terms is as under:

Cognitive Abilities:

Cognitive abilities means mental or intellectual abilities involved in perception, knowing and abstract thinking.Cognitive abilities are the brain based skills we need to carry out any task from simplest to the most complex. Cognitive abilities have more to do with the mechanism of how we learn, remember, solve the problem and pay attention rather than with any actual knowledge. Cognitive abilities include verbal ability, reasoning ability, ability to manipulate abstract symbols, comprehension ability and visual spatial ability. In the present study, cognitive abilities refer to the following four abilities generally shown or demonstrated by elementary (upper primary) school students upto the age of14 years.

i) Verbal Ability

ii) Numerical Ability

iii) Verbal Reasoning Ability

iv) Abstract Reasoning Ability

These abilities will be measured with the help of a self-developed cognitive abilities test.

Social skills

Social skills in the present study refer to social behaviour exhibited by elementary (upper primary) school students in different home and school based situations. These social skills can also be defined as the abilities shown in behaviour by elementary (upper primary) school students in various social situations. In the present study, only four major social skills namely co-operation, assertion, empathy and self-control will be measured with the help of‘Social Skill Rating System’ (SSRS) developed by Gresham and Elliott (1990)whichwill be translated into Hindi language and validated by the investigator herself.

Home Environment:

The home is the primary group of society. Its characteristic feature is effective bonds among the members in the home and concern for each other.

In the present study, home environmentwill bethe self- perception of the elementary (upper primary) school students about the environment of their own home characterized by unconditional love, acceptance, permissiveness, democracy, co- operation, encouragement, tolerance, warm relationship among all the members of the home.It will be assessed through the Home Environment Scale developed by Dr. MeenuAgarawal (2003). This scale measures the home environment in terms of the self-perception of the students belonging to age group of 10-19 years.

School Environment:

A school has to provide an excellent environment to the students studying therein to develop their heritage. A school is not a rigorous reformatory where juvenile suspects are kept under vigilant watch but a well-constructed school is a place where it provides an environment of home, a sacred shrine, a social center, and all are beautifully blended with a synthetic structure.

In the present study, school environment will be the self-perception of the elementary(upper primary) school students regarding physical and educational/ psychological environment of their own school. It will be measured with the help of School Environment Inventory developed by Dr. M. Singh (2001).

Elementary School Students:

Those students in the age group of 12-14 years and studying in 7^{th} or 8^{th} class (upper primary classes) in govt. schools affiliated to H.P. Board of School Education, Dharmashala.

RESEARCH METHOD TO BE ADOPTED:

Plan and procedure is an important part of any investigation if it is to be carried out in a systematic manner. The main purpose of the present investigation is to study the cognitive abilities and social skills of elementary school students and how these two variables are affected by their home and school environment. Hence, for realizing the objectives of present study, survey technique under descriptive method of research will be employed.

SAMPLING:

There are two basic approaches adopted in the selection of the sample, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The concept of random selection of the cases is used in probability sampling while in non-probability sampling, the researcher's judgment and convenience are sole determining factors in the choice of some units. The researcher will adopt different methods of sampling (as mentioned below) in carrying out present investigation.

All the twelve districts of H.P. will be considered as the sampling universe for the present study. These districts will be then arranged in a sequence from higher literacy rate to lower literacy rate. The researcher will employ quota sampling technique.

At the first stage, researcher will select 4 districts by adopting systematic random sampling procedure. The first district from first group of three districts (formed on the basis of highest literacy rate in H. P.) will be selected systematically from remaining three groups by giving a gap or difference of three.

After the selection of the districts, three elementary education blocks from each of four districts will be selected by adopting random sampling procedure.

At the next stage, 10 elementary schools from each of the selected education block will be taken into consideration by employing random

sampling procedure. However, the representation will be given to the elementary schools located in rural and semi urban areas in each district.

At the last stage, all the students in the age group of 12-14 years (studying in 7^{th}or 8^{th} class in sampled govt. schools) who will be available on the day of data collection will be considered for the final sample of the study.

RESEARCH TOOLS TO BE DEVELOPED:

1. Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT):

In order to measure different cognitive abilities possessed by elementary (upper primary) school students, the researcher herself will construct and standardize a cognitive abilities test. For this, the researcher will concentrate mainly on four cognitive abilities only i.e. verbal ability, numerical ability, verbal reasoning ability and abstract reasoning ability. The items of the cognitive abilities test will be oriented around five core subjects viz. English, Hindi, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies along with content based on various life experiences gained by the children up to the age of 14 years in different formal and informal situations.

The test items related to verbal ability of elementary (upper primary) school students will be based on word spellings, synonyms, antonyms, grammar, sentence completion, missing words, word pairs etc.Numerical ability test items will include basic arithmetic operations, ratio and proportion, decimals, graph and table interpretation etc.For measuring the verbal reasoning abilities among the students, the test items will be constructed in the form of comprehension questions based on given passages. Items related to abstract reasoning ability will be based on general puzzles and riddles (in verbal form), series completion etc.

The cognitive abilities test will be developed by employing following steps:

i) Creation of item pool (Preliminary draft of cognitive abilities test).

ii) Revision and editing of test items by seeking expert opinion. (Technical editing and language editing).

iii) Carrying out item analysis of preliminary draft of cognitive abilities test.

iv) Estimating reliability of final draft of cognitive abilities test through test-retest method.

v) Ascertaining validity of cognitive abilities test through content validity and criterion-related validity procedures.

2. Social Skill Rating System (SSRS):

In order to measure different social skills of elementary (upper primary) school students, the 'Social Skills Rating System' as given by Frank M.Gresham and Stephen N.Elliott(1990) will be used by making certain modifications. This tool is in English Language and has been specifically developed for Canadian school students of class 7 through 12^{th},so the researcher in the present study will translate the items of this tool in Hindi language and take into consideration theprevailing local, social and cultural conditions. The content mentioned in the items of the scale will be interpreted by giving due consideration to social behaviours acceptable in Indian situations and accordingly, the translation of this scale will be done.Also, the translation will be carried out back and forth i.e. English to Hindi translation and then, Hindi to English translation of the scale so as to improve its accuracy in measuring social skills of elementary (upper primary)school students of this region. Then onwards, content validity of Hindi translated version of SSRS will be ascertained by seeking experts' views and judgment.The researcher will ascertain the reliability of SSRS by employing test-retest method and spilt half method.

The 'Social Skills Rating System' is a norm-referenced assessment tool that focuses on social behaviour in pre-school,elementary and secondary students (class 7 through 12). The SSRS is a behaviourand personality assessment tool that can be used to identify social behaviour strengths and to develop individualized educational plans for the students requiring social skills assistance.

This tool is to be filled by students themselves and can be completed in 15 to 20 minutes on an average. This scale is comprised of 39 items with 3 alternative responses i.e. never, sometimes and very often; describing individual's typical social skills. This scale can be used to measure following social skills among elementary school students.

i) Assertion

ii) Empathy

iii) Co-operation

iv) Self-control

The scoring of SSRS generally takes 5 minutes and is scored by assigning zero value to 'never',1 to 'sometimes' and 2 to 'very often' response on the statements of the scale. A higher score on the scale indicates higher level of social skills and vice-versa.

SSRS has an internal consistency coefficient of 0.90 which indicates that SSRS is adequately internally consistent. The test-retest reliability of SSRS was found to be 0.68 which is significantly high. The validity of SSRS has been ascertained in terms of content validity, construct validity and convergent validity. The detailed description about to its preparation, standardization, norms for interpretation etc. has been mentioned in manual of SSRS.

RESEARCH TOOLS TO BE USED:

1. Home Environment Scale by Agarawal (2003):

Home Environment scale (HES) by Dr. MeenuAgarawal (2003) will be used to measure home environment of elementary school students. The scale consists of 60 statements out of which 30 statements are of favourable nature (with sr.no. 1, 2, 3,5, 6, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 37, 38, 40, 43, 45, 48, 49, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58) that indicate good home environment while remaining 30 statements are of unfavourable nature that indicate poor home environment.

The reliability of the scale was determined by test - retest method and co-efficient of correlation was found to be 0.82. Validity coefficient was determined by content validity method as well as correlation with home environment inventory of Dr. K. S. Mishra and correlation coefficients were found to be 0.69 and 0.71 respectively.

The tool is self-administering in nature which is to be completed by the students and show self-perception of the students about their own home environment.

For scoring of the scale, there will be 1 mark allotment for 'Yes' and zero mark for 'No' on the statements indicating favourable environment, and zero mark for 'Yes' and 1 mark for 'No' on statements showing unfavourable home environment. All marks will be added and interpreted in terms of following classification of home environment i.e. Excellent, Good, Moderate and Poor. A higher score on the scale indicates better home environment and vice-versa. The Z-score and T- score norms have been given separately for male and female population for interpreting raw scores obtained on HES. A detailed description of administration of the scale has been provided in its manual.

2. School Environment Inventory by Singh (2001):

School Environment Inventory (SEI) by Dr. M. Singh (2001) will be used to assess the school environment as perceived by the students. There are 45 statements in it. Out of these 13 statements are of negative nature (with sr. no. 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21, 23, 25, 26, 36, 37, 38, 40) that reflects poor school environment, while remaining 32 statements are of positive nature which indicate good school environment. Although this inventory had been validated on secondary school students but can be used with elementary school students with certain care and precautions. The coefficient of reliability of SEI was ascertained by test- retest method which was found to be 0.76. Validity coefficient of SEI was computed by its correlation with school environment inventory of Dr. K. S. Mishra and coefficient of correlation was reported as

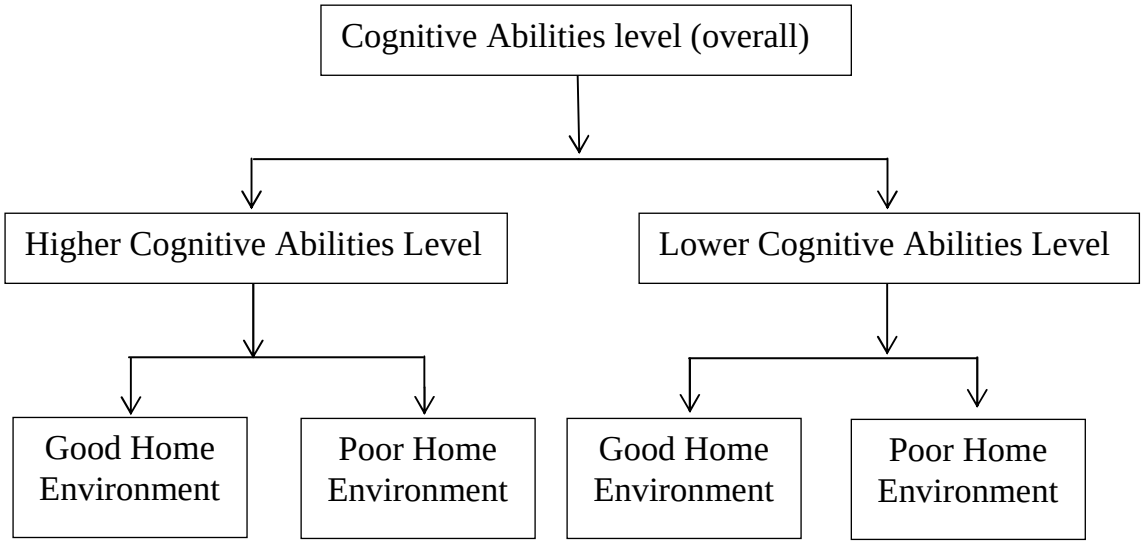
0.68. The scale is to be filled by the students and their self-perception about school environment can thus be studied through this scale.

Forscoring of the inventory, there will be 1 mark allotment for 'Yes' and 'Zero' mark for 'No' on positive statements and 'Zero' mark for 'Yes' and 1 mark for 'No' on negative statements. All marks will be summed up and interpreted in terms of following classification of school environment i.e. Excellent, Good, Moderate, Poor, and Very poor. Higher score on the scale indicates better school environment and vice-versa. The Z- score and T-score norms have been given for interpreting raw scores obtained on SEI. A detailed description of administration of the scale has been provided in its manual.

RESEARCH DESIGNS TO BE EMPLOYED:

Following research designs will be employed for realizing the objectives of present study.

1. **Main and Interactional Effects of Level of Overall Cognitive Abilities and Type of Home Environment (2 x 2 Research Design)**



(Scores on following four Social Skills – Dependent Variable)

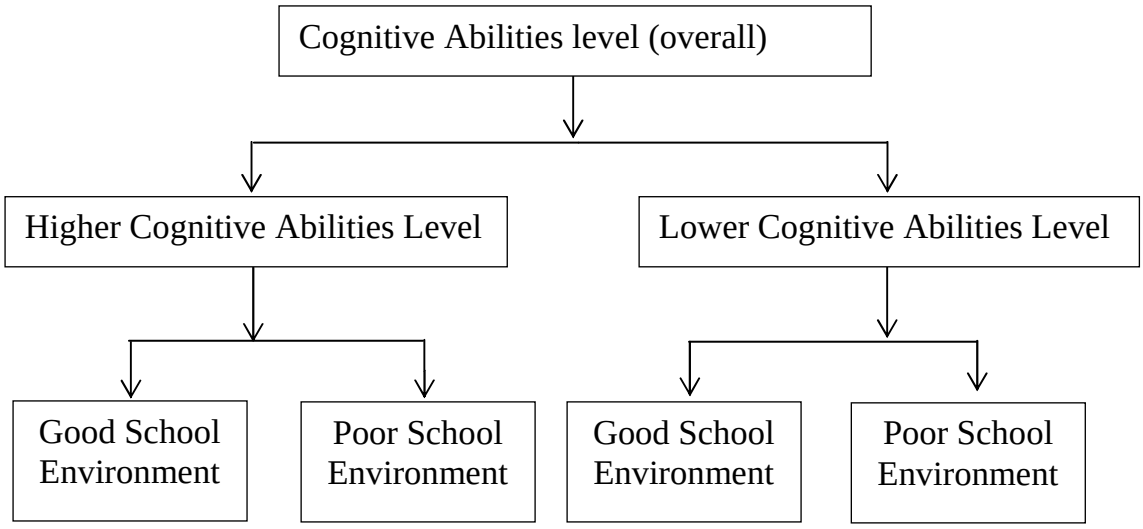
i) Assertion

ii) Empathy

iii)Co-operation

iv) Self Control

2. Main and Interactional Effects of Level of Overall Cognitive Abilities and Type of School Environment (2 x 2 Research Design)



(Scores on following four Social Skills – Dependent Variable)

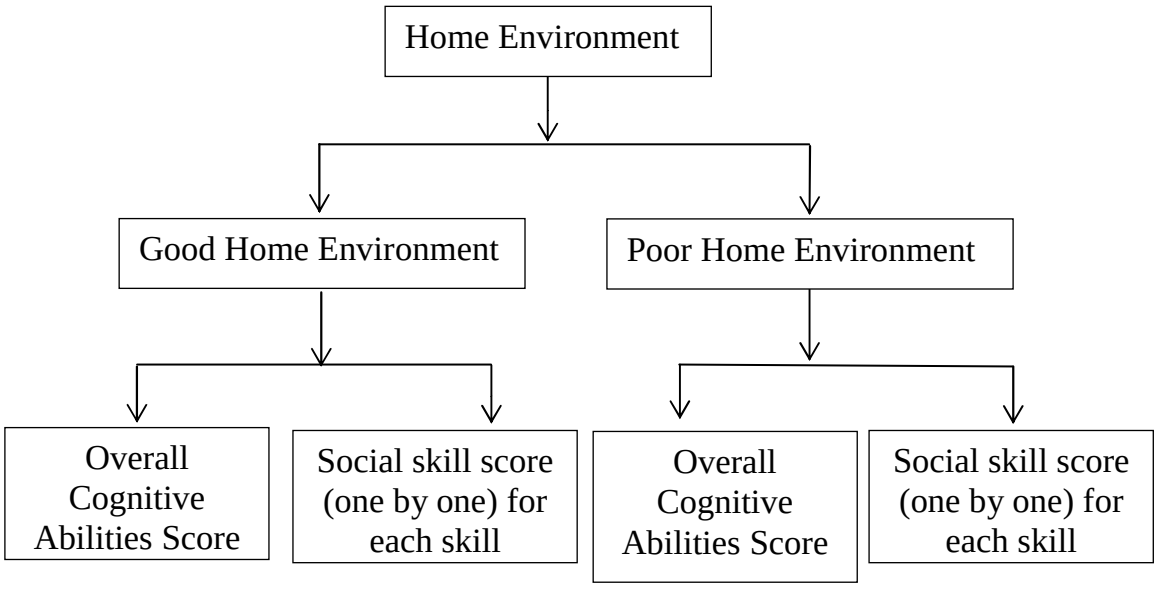
i) Assertion

ii) Empathy

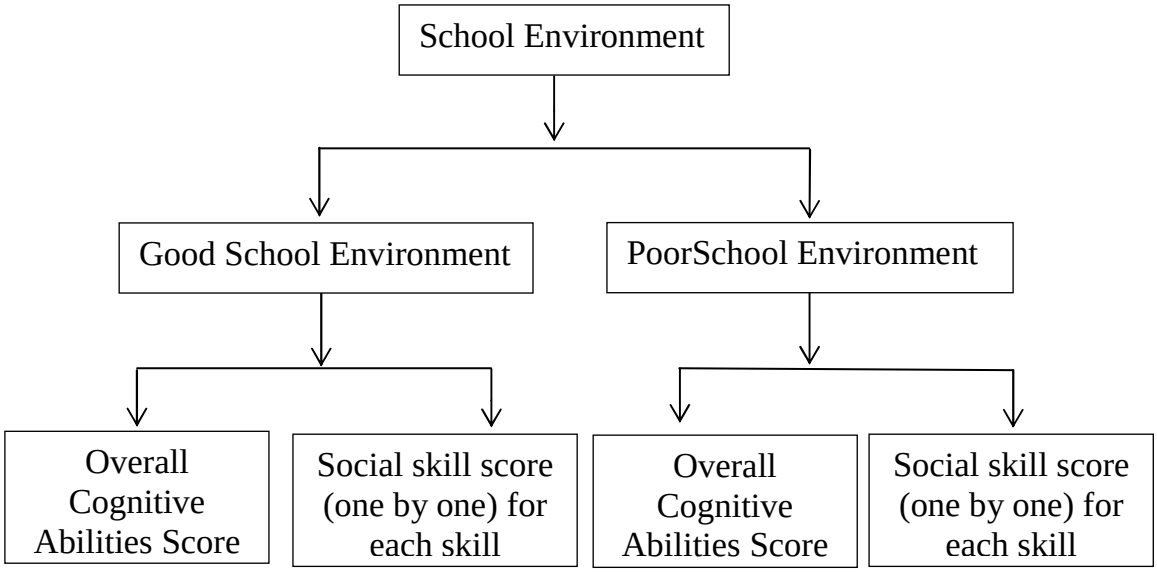
iii) Co-operation

iv) Self Control

3. Correlation Between Overall Cognitive Abilities and Various Social Skills with respect to Type of Home Environment


Home Environment
Good Home Environment
Poor Home Environment
Overall Cognitive Abilities Score
Social skill score (one by one) for each skill
Overall Cognitive Abilities Score
Social skill score (one by one) for each skill

4. Correlation Between Overall Cognitive Abilities and Various Social Skills with respect to Type of School Environment


School Environment
Good School Environment
PoorSchool Environment
Overall Cognitive Abilities Score
Social skill score (one by one) for each skill
Overall Cognitive Abilities Score
Social skill score (one by one) for each skill

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES TO BE EMPLOYED:

In order to achieve the objectives of the present study, different types of the descriptive and inferential statistical techniques will be applied.

In order to study the prevalence of various cognitive abilities and social skills of elementary (upper primary) school students, percentage analysis will be done.

For studying the significant differences in the cognitive abilities of elementary (upper primary) school students across different levels of home environment and school environment,'t-test' will be applied.

To find out the correlation between various cognitive abilities and home as well as school environment of elementary (upper primary) school students, product moment correlation technique will be used. Further, to findout the correlation between level of overall cognitive abilities and social skills of elementary (upper primary) school students with respect to home and school environment, product moment correlation technique will be applied.

For finding out the main and interactional effects of level of overall cognitive abilities, home environment and school environment on social skills

of elementary (upper primary) school students, the statistical techniques of 'Two way Analysis of Variance' (ANOVA) will be applied.

In order to classify elementary (upper primary) school students into different categories on the basis of their overall cognitive abilities, home environment and school environment scores, the mean and standard deviation values on the respective variables will be taken into consideration.

In order to study the predictive efficacy of home and school environment in determining various cognitive abilities and social skills of elementary (upper primary) school students, the technique of simple linear regression will be employed and simple regression equations will be worked out.

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